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School Committee Minutes 09-09-2003

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2003
7:30 PM

Present: – Suzanne Owayda Chair
Paul Schlichtman, Vice Chair
Joani LaMachia, Secretary
Barbara Goodman
Sue Sheffler
Jeff Thielman
Martin Thrope

Superintendent: Kay Donovan
Asst. Supt: Joanne Gurry
Special Education Director: Marilyn Bisbicos
Budget Analyst: Janet Collins

Call to order: 7:35 PM

WELCOME BACK

Chair, Suzanne Owayda welcomed the Committee and gave a review and update on the School Committee summer work. Suzanne acknowledged the work of the Arlington Partners in Education Foundation for their emergency fundraising effort raising a total of \$270,000.00. The school committee held 2 meeting's 1 workshop and numerous subcommittee meetings. Ms. Owayda explained how this year would differ from past years due to budget cuts, most notably the net loss of approximately 97 staff members.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

APPROVAL OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Supt. Donovan introduced Robert Addelson as her recommendation as Chief Financial Officer of Arlington Public Schools. Mrs. Donovan stated that he is highly qualified and outlined his qualifications.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously
Voted to approve the recommendation of Supt. Donovan to appoint Robert Addelson as the new Chief Financial Office of Arlington Public Schools with compensation as noted. (\$93,000.00 plus \$1000.00 towards life insurance)

FIELD TRIP APPROVAL

Cheryl Hemenway, AHS Choral director, requested approval of two field trips sponsored by the Performing Arts Department.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously
Voted to approve the Performing Arts Dept. Jazz Band Music Festival February 13-18, 2004 to Port Canaveral, Florida, Bahamas.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously
Voted to approve the Performing Arts Dept AHS Band, Orchestra & Chorus to Charleston, SC April 28, to May 2, 2004.

Ms. Goodman requested that any changes be brought back before the Committee.

Supt. Donovan congratulated Ms. Hemenway on being a finalist for the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Award. As a runner up Ms. Hemenway was able to attend a two-week space camp and as such enables an AHS student to receive a scholarship to attend space camp next summer.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Ms. LaMachia reviewed correspondence.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Report on Opening of School - Supt. Donovan reported that overall the opening of school was smooth. The Thompson school was without power for a few hours due to a transformer outage.

- Reading teachers will be returning due to the fundraising of APEF.

- Grants received to date \$2,497,157.

- The Spanish program is returning but will be revamped with grades 1-5 attending twice a week and kindergarten students attending probably once per week.

- The Italian grant was not renewed

- The Kindergarten enhancement grant will provide for assistants for K-1 at the elementary schools. Supt.

Donovan explained additionally each school would have an appointed Volunteer Coordinator to train parents as part of the Parents Academy; parents will be trained to assist teachers/staff in the schools. Each employee or volunteer in the schools must undergo a CORI check as part of new state regulations.

- Supt. Donovan explained that Committee Members might be receiving calls and letters about the lack of traffic supervisors available to cross students to and from school. Six positions were cut from the budget:

- At the Dallen: Dow Avenue and Rhinecliff and at Appleton and Wachusett Streets

- At the Thompson: Everett Street and University Road and Broadway and Bates Road

- At the Ottoson: Gray Street and Fountain Avenue and Appleton Street and Mass. Ave.

Committee Members voiced concern over the elimination of the traffic supervisors at the schools and asked what would be the best venue to obtain pertinent information on the volume of students walking and the volume of students crossing at each location.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was unanimously Voted to direct the School Committee Chair to meet with Safety Office McKenna and Ed Starr of the Traffic Advisory Committee to collect data on where and how many students cross. In addition, to present a recommendation on possible solutions including additional crossing guards and or traffic signals or control devices.

- Guidance Director:** Supt Donovan reported that a finalist has been selected and would discuss this in executive session.

- Enrollment Figures**

AHS principal Steve Woodcock addressed class size at the high school. Currently there are 6 classes with 30 students or more, 81 classes with 25-29 students, 75 classes with 21-24 students and 108 classes with 15-20 students; the difference in class size from the previous year, 2002-2003 is 36 classes with 26-29 students and 1 class with 30 or more students. Mr. Woodcock acknowledges that juniors and seniors may have up to 9 directed studies in a 7-day cycle and freshmen and sophomores may have 3-5 studies. The Committee requested that Mr. Woodcock report back by October 1st with a more accurate picture of class sizes in comparison with last years October 1st report in addition to the mean number of studies this year compared to the last 2-3 years.

Mr. Woodcock will provide details of items that were deleted from the AHS student handbook at the next meeting; the School Committee will vote on approval of the handbook at the next meeting.

- Full Day Kindergarten Report** – There are currently 407 students enrolled in Kindergarten. Of those, approximately 300 have paid in full, 24 students are repeating, 20 students are attending the half day program, 5 are required as part of a student's IEP, 1 student is under DSS custody and the remainder are requesting financial assistance or requesting a payment plan.

PERMIT PARKING IN SCHOOL LOTS

Supt. Donovan explained that the Board of Selectmen want to sell permits for overnight parking in school parking lots.

The purpose would be to raise additional revenues that would be shared between the Town and the school department. Mrs. Donovan was not opposed to the overnight parking but did have concerns over snow removal in a timely manner for school personnel and also did not want school personnel responsible for enforcing, towing, and other violations. Mr. Schlichtman made note of the fact that approving the request may result in the added bonus of the Arlington Police Department monitoring the AHS school lot and ticketing cars without permits.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously Voted the approval of overnight permit parking in school parking lots as outlined by the Department of Community Safety/Board of Selectmen.

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS

Mr. Schlichtman requested detail for the warrants and that approval be moved to the next meeting.

VOTE ON MASC/FRIEND OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AWARD

M. Goodman requested that the School Committee support the nomination of the Arlington Partners in Education for the MASC "Friend of Public Education Award". Ms. Goodman noted, "In the two months following our failed override, the APIE raised \$270,000.00 so that the APS could rehire Reading Specialists for each of our seven elementary schools; 805 individuals and business donated to this effort with gifts in the range of \$5.00 to \$5000.00."

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was unanimously

Voted to recommend the Arlington Partners in Education for the MASC "Friend of Public Education Award."

FIFTH GRADE SCIENCE CAMP

Ms. Owayda explained that the science coordinator position that was eliminated with the budget cuts also coordinated the 5th grade summer camp. Ms. Owayda introduced Tom Briner as the parent of a fifth grade student who has volunteered to coordinate this year's science camp. Tom and Diane Briner are working with Alton Jones, have presented slide shows to parents and students, have 44 chaperones signed up and will train them. Mr. Briner publicly acknowledged the help of Nancy Blasi (former coordinator who no longer works in Arlington) for meeting and sharing all of her files and notes of past years at Alton Jones.

On a motion by Ms. LaMachia and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously

Voted to recognize and accept Tom and Diane Briner as the volunteer co-coordinators of the 5th grade science camp at Alton Jones.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

.. **Budget** Mr. Schlichtman reported that the subcommittee met and discussed ways of looking at areas of concern, developing a good inquiry process, and at implementing a multi year plan. Mr. Schlichtman developed a rubric for the data collection process that will compare and contrast what we have lost from FY01, what it would cost to be restored, what would the committee need to decide with a \$1 million gain or loss and what would be the fiscal implication of reorganizing schools or administrative structure. The subcommittee will work on the rubric at their next meeting, Monday, September 15th at 7:30 pm.

In response to Mr. Thrope's request for a current detailed budget Supt. Donovan stated that it would be difficult to do so without a CFO but would provide one as soon as possible.

Mr. Schlichtman reminded members of the MASC Delegate Assembly November 12-14.

.. **Specialized Student Services** Mr. Thrope reported that the subcommittee met twice over the summer, no votes were taken but items discussed included:

- o The discussion of fees, instrumental music, athletics, club fees, student fees, and rental fees.
- o Human resources, compliance with the minority hiring policy, hiring process without a HRO.
- o Special Education, financing, aides in the classroom, distributing programs to other schools.

.. **Community Relations** - Joani LaMachia reported that the subcommittee met over the summer and discussed a number of issues. The Committee reviewed the calendar and discussed the initiative for the year; prevalent was communication between the School Committee, schools and community:

- o Following up on how the School Committee can collaborate and work with the June 15 Coalition.
- o Sponsoring and supporting a meeting during National Education week between all school administrators and staff to discuss how budget constraints have been dealt with.
- o Joani, Suzanne and Sue met and welcomed staff at different schools the first day of school and suggested doing so again next year.

Ms. Owayda brought to the committees' attention the issue of redistricting noting how the currently the Bishop School is overcrowded; she would like devote a full meeting working on the issue. Supt. Donovan explained that redistricting was a priority last year but was put on hold while the decision on the rebuilding of the Dallin School was an issue.

Ms. Owayda plans on making the meeting of September 23rd a working meeting focusing on fees and the meeting of October 28th on restructuring and redistricting.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations and a personnel issue with no further business to be conducted upon return to open session except to adjourn. RC: Unanimous

Executive session: 10:45 – 11:20 PM

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously
Voted to adjourn @ 11:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary